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WASHINGTON
WRIGHT SAYS SOME COVERT ACTION JUSTIFIED IN NICARAGUA

After hearing classified testimony about U.S. covert work in Nicaragua, House Majority Leader Jim Wright says some undercover action was justified.

Wright, D-Texas, spoke with reporters Thursday after a day-long, closed meeting of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The panel heard classified testimony about covert activities in Nicaragua and then delayed a vote on an aid cutoff bill.

Wright said a committee vote probably would come next week.

The committee was briefed by Deputy CIA Director John McMahon and Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam.

Following the briefing, Wright said the United States needs "a basic symmetry" between overt and undercover efforts to help pro-U.S. governments in Central America, but he added that "we ought to renounce covert efforts aimed at overthrowing other governments."

Reagan administration officials have denied that the U.S. goal in backing the rebels is to oust the leftist Nicaraguan government, but some rebel leaders have declared that is their intent.

Wright's comments and the delay in the expected vote prompted speculation that Rep. Clement Zablocki, D-Wis., committee chairman and a sponsor of the aid cutoff bill, was seeking a compromise. Several committee members said, however, that no compromise plan had been presented.

EXCERPTED